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DE WTE 3795

FROM WALT ROSTOW  
TO THE PRESIDENT  
CITE CAP82430

Received: Washington CommGen  
4:10 PM EDT Friday 20 Sep 1968

Received: EBJ Ranch CommGen  
3:37 PM CDST Friday 20 Sep 1968

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SEPTEMBER 20, 1968

IF THE FOLLOWING ACCOUNT IS TRUE -- AND THE SOURCE IS GOOD -- IT'S HARD TO SEE HOW THE SOVIET LEADERS ARE GOING TO BE ABLE TO LIVE FOR LONG WITH DUBCEK, CERNIK, AND SMRKOVSKY. BUT MAYBE SO....

QUOTE

IN A PRIVATE CONVERSATION IN EARLY SEPTEMBER 1968, LUDVIK VESELY, ASSISTANT CHIEF EDITOR OF THE CZECH WEEKLY "LITERARNI LISTI", SAID THAT CZECH COMMUNIST PARTY LEADER ALEXANDER DUBCEK HAD GIVEN HIM AN ACCOUNT OF HIS ARREST AND SUBSEQUENT MISTREATMENT IN THE USSR. VESELY'S REPORT OF DUBCEK'S STORY FOLLOWS.

DUBCEK STATED THAT THE SOVIET SOLDIER WHO ARRESTED HIM ON 21 AUGUST 1968 DID SO "IN THE NAME OF THE REVOLUTIONARY GOVERNMENT OF ALOIS INDRA". THIS WAS THE FIRST INDICATION DUBCEK HAD OF THE PERSON SELECTED BY THE SOVIETS TO REPLACE OR CLEAN THEMSELVES. NEGOTIATIONS BEGAN, ALTHOUGH THE FOUR MEN WERE REFUSED PERMISSION TO SPEAK. IT WAS NOT UNTIL AN AGREEMENT HAD BEEN REACHED THAT THEY WERE ALLOWED TO WASH AND GIVEN FRESH CLOTHES. THE RETURN TO PRAGUE WAS THEN DELAYED AS THE SOVIET AUTHORITIES INITIALLY REFUSED TO ALLOW KRIEDEL TO RETURN HOME WITH HIS COLLEAGUES. THE SOVIETS GAVE WAY ON THIS POINT WHEN THE OTHERS REFUSED TO DEPART WITHOUT HIM.

END QUOTE

DTG: 202010Z SEP 1968

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